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THIS ISSUE - HOLINESS

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EDITORIAL



WITH this issue we begin the sixth year of INTEGRITY, but on a note of sadness. Ed Willock, who has been Co-Editor of the magazine for the last five years, who has done all its cartoons and jingles and much of the writing, suffered a cerebral hemorrhage on September 16. He will be hospitalized for many weeks but is expected to recover from the paralysis which now affects his right side. For the past three years he has been working with a group of family men building their own houses in community on weekends and vacations. He may not be able to resume this hard physical labor but he will be able to write and draw again. Please pray for him and for his wife and eight small children.

* * *

Since this is our anniversary, we can't help getting retrospective. One thing we have seen from the editorial chair is that American Catholics split badly when it comes to viewing contemporary events. What makes one group of people weep makes the other rejoice. What some repudiate, others embrace. And this is true not just in superficial matters like political allegiances, but the cleavage goes to the roots of daily living. It shows in our mail, which usually cancels itself out on controversial issues. If one letter to the editor says we have betrayed the Church, the next will say we number among the saints. The net result is a certain detachment from public opinion.

The other thing we notice is that, controversy aside, the articles in INTEGRITY are effective pretty much in direct ratio to the holiness (so far as we can judge) of the authors thereof. This is a sobering observation, making us painfully aware of our deficiencies in this matter. Yet it is a heartening one too, showing that Christ *is* the center of society.

So we are glad to begin our sixth year by emphasizing holiness, and we assert our continuing belief in the power of sanctity.

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THE EDITOR

INTEGRITY - 1

Inside the Golden Circle

Berdyaev, in a protest against the Church's stand on divorce, comes out with the statement that "the majority of marriages are unhappy." It is one of those outbursts found so frequently in philosophical writing which, once uttered, assume proportions of fact in the popular mind but which in reality have no scientific basis. For how could Berdyaev, or anyone else for that matter, gain access to this intimate confidence in so many marriages as to constitute a "majority"?

Having discredited the scientific value of his statement, I shall now proceed to endorse it wholeheartedly as an intuitive recognition of a universal mystery. Saint Paul could have made it, or Saint Thomas More, or Saint John Vianney, all with serene countenances.

The difference in point of view lies in the assessment of the value of "happiness." To Berdyaev, exponent of Existentialism that he is, unhappiness seems to spell tragedy. In fact "tragic" is his very word for the conflicts to which he says the family subjects the individual in his vocation and in his spiritual life. There is no doubt that there is bound to be friction—especially felt by souls with a strong sense of vocation, a deep spirituality. But is not the suffering this entails the very stuff the saints seize upon to fashion, not only their own vocational and spiritual strength, but that of whole communities surrounding them?

Given the frailty of human nature, given the certainty that the most careful selection of a mate cannot preclude unforeseen antagonisms, given the fact that loving consists in a surrender of self and that connubial love demands a complete surrender, which can be made at times with joyful abandon, but which often inflicts severe wounds of mortification on the spirit, to mention but a few of the handicaps that beset wedlock, only a moonstruck sentimentalist can expect to find it a bed of roses.

I have not read many Catholic books on marriage, but those I have read make it quite clear that it exposes its subjects to many trials and difficulties, for which they should be prepared. Somehow or other, though, whether because the books I read were written by unmarried people, or because they dealt with the subject from the standpoint of apologetics, or simply because all academic theorizing lacks conviction when confronted with actual experience, the hazards they presented never seemed quite real to me. It was as though the authors set them up like ninepins,

sent the ball of Christian reason zooming down the alley, and—strike!—they all toppled over—there was nothing to it.

Certainly it is naive to believe, as so many Freud-bound pagans seem to, that happiness in marriage depends solely on sexual harmony and satisfaction. But it seems equally naive to imply that the Sacrament of Matrimony automatically turns its participants into placid philosophers, impervious to the burning vicissitudes of love. There is an intangible suffering that two people who love can inflict on each other. The deeper their spiritual life, the greater their disposition to holy joy, the larger their capacity for this particular type of punishment.

Of course, no way of life is free from a certain amount of pain. The artist must endure severe discipline before he can express himself adequately. And after his training is completed, if his message is to have any vitality, any truth, it must be drawn from a core of unrest surpassing the rigors of his apprenticeship. The mystic, after the purgative night of the senses, must undergo the excruciating agony of the dark night of the soul, inflicted by One Who is Pure Love.

The Pattern of Human Love

It seems to me that all human relationships follow, on the natural level, the pattern of the three stages of the spiritual life: the purgative stage, the illuminative stage, and the unitive stage. Before tracing this pattern in marriage, I should like to show briefly its applications in another relationship.

For example, during infancy and early childhood the child can be said to experience love for his parents in the pre-purgative stage. This period is marked by a strong feeling of dependence, a seeking of self-gratification, and great satisfaction in sensible consolations.

During adolescence the child becomes aware of his parent as a being apart from himself, having its own *raison d'être*, yet interfering with his freedom. A reserve is born, a coldness, a critical attitude, accompanied by agonies of shame and self-reproach. Estrangement takes place, corresponding on the human level to the seeming estrangement from God that takes place in the dark night of the soul of the mystic.

This is a natural phase of growth and detachment, and if the parent understands it, he can accept his child's alienation with humility and serenity and humor. By an attitude of patience, by not interfering with the work of the Holy Ghost in the child's soul, by gently allowing him to free himself from his infantile ties, he can help him to stand on his own two feet. If this crisis

is healthy for the youngster, it is just as salutary for the parent. He is forced to turn to God for help. The Christian parent remembers the words of another Youth to His parents: "Did ye not know that I must be about My Father's business?" and prays, "Lord, I can no longer reach him. Even while I cherished his littleness and helplessness, he was Yours. I return him to You. You love him more than I can. Do with him as You will. Mary behold your son!" And then stands by.

It is the grasping parent who cannot slacken his hold, who invokes the Fourth Commandment where no willful violation is involved, who rubs salt on the raw flesh exposed in the tearing-apart process by charges of disloyalty and ingratitude—it is this parent who prolongs the adolescence of his child, who sows the seeds of neurosis and maladjustment.

With the relative independence attained by maturity comes—paradoxically enough—the unitive stage. Each person now stands on an equal footing as a separate cell in the Mystical Body. Parent and child are now bound together, no longer by the sweet compulsion of temporal necessity, but by the far sweeter interdependence of grace, by an eternal communion.

Nature of Conjugal Love

Of all human relations conjugal love is the most profound. It was the first human union, and in its fresh intensity it mirrored the love-life of the Divine Trinity. Without the arduous preparation demanded for it of fallen man, it sprang into being invested with all the unspeakable bliss of the unitive stage—on the natural as well as on the supernatural level.

Since the Fall, Christ, through His suffering, death, and resurrection, has vastly repaired our nature, but sin and its effects still dog us. To assume, therefore, that in marriage bride and groom are entering a state of continuous earthly paradise like that in the Garden of Eden, is to be deluded by the heresy of naturalism or to be guilty of arrant hypocrisy. Only a marriage between saints—*established* in their sanctity and living in a perfect world—could be wholly cloudless. But if people had to wait until they were irrevocable saints to marry, the human race would have died out long ago. With most Christians the struggle for sanctity is life-long. Our lives are a prolonged Advent in which "every valley must be filled, every mountain and hill must be brought low, the crooked must be made straight and the rough ways smooth," and it is through our vocations that we work. Naturally, where two are made one, the task becomes complex, but the corresponding graces are also multiplied.

Humanity's debt to its Maker is twofold: love of God and love of neighbor. They cannot be put in two separate compartments like the two loves of Saint Augustine, for he was dealing with manifestations of good and evil. In fact, one of the factors which contributes to the debasement of marriage is the Manichean tendency to associate the intense expression of human charity found there with the love that Saint Augustine condemned. Though dual in function, love is one in essence.

Through its two organized institutions of Holy Orders and Matrimony, both hallowed by Sacraments, the Church has defined special channels through which these loves may flow toward their completion. These channels sustain and nourish each other, one supplying the Mystical Body with the life-giving Sacraments and preaching the Word of God, the other contributing the raw material into which the life is breathed and the Word is made flesh. In one, love of God in Himself is the motivating force. In the other, the actuating impulse is love of God in man. Neither love precludes the other, for through the Incarnation they are co-ordinate and indissoluble. On the one hand, the priest and the religious profess the "hatred" for father and mother, sister and brother, exhorted by Our Lord, fully aware that it is not the deadly passion the world knows by that name, but second love, sublimated and irradiated by the first. On the other hand, "all men take not this word but they to whom it is given." The rest must serve Him through the instruments He sends, since He has so ordained it. Christ has chosen to conceal Himself in the instrument of the beloved. And it is only through acceptance of the particular kind of suffering found in marriage that the rags of His tender masquerade are stripped and His adorable thorn-pierced Face is revealed.

Honeymoon Stage

If it were not for the pre-purgative or honeymoon stage of marriage, with its emotional and physical raptures, few would have the courage to embark on it. Fortunately, it recruits its own crew.

The main characteristic of this period is the overwhelming wonder and delight at the sense of being loved. The more humble the person, the more poignant is his incredulous joy at the miracle that has occurred. The more proud he is, the more he will be stung by small slights, the more tense is his fear that he is not being loved enough, the greater is his demand for endearments, tokens, gestures, proofs of devotion. How terrible and pitiful is the human need to be loved!

The enchantment of being loved is heightened by the fact that lovers idealize each other. They see in each other the epitome of all their aspirations and cry out with the psalmist: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." Because of their strong physical and emotional ardor they feel themselves to be shaken by a great spiritual metamorphosis, although the latter may be only in its embryonic stage. In response to the realization of being singled out by such a perfect being, they are willing to surrender every possession, undertake any task, make any sacrifice. This is the noblest aspect of their love, and the one most richly rewarded, for what they really see in each other, what they are willing to die for, is Christ, the Sinless One, hidden behind the facades of their unique personalities. Through them He drinks the love for which He is insatiable, through them He loves in return.

But it is far from perfect. The twin elements of true charity are there—love of God and love of neighbor. But love of self is there, too, distorting, demanding, dividing. This projection of self, if indulged in, makes it impossible for love to find its way to God. The lover, delighting in his own image, turns the beloved into a distraction from God rather than an avenue to His Citadel.

The Purgative Stage

After having gone to such lengths to attract those He loves to Himself, God becomes impatient of His disguise. He longs to be seen, to be loved for Himself, to share His kingdom openly. How terrible and mysterious is the Divine Thirst to be loved!

There is, of course, one condition. Can they drink of His cup? Self-love must be eradicated, they must die to themselves. So (how anxiously, I like to think, with what agonies of foreboding lest He lose them!) He quits His ambush and seeks a new retreat—the cross. And the dark night of marriage begins.

Not that He has abandoned them. He is still with them, in their faith, in their desire for goodness, in their oneness and in their separateness, making issue with them against temptation. It is only the blazing radiance of His Divine Presence that he has removed. The shadow of His Cross, which once plunged the world into darkness, lies over them. Each has assumed its ominous angularity. In their embrace they feel the roughness of its wood.

They see each other with new eyes. Everything is distorted. Molehills become mountains. Sexual dissonances arise. The normal tension between male and female is strained. Unsuspected imperfections assume gigantic proportions. Psychological quirks, such as immaturity, lack of emotional balance, and diffi-

dent reserves, dig gulfs of separation. Differences in temperament, in religious and cultural background, in points of view, in habits, appear as insurmountable walls between them. The very traits which once endeared them to each other are now exasperating: the foreign accent which made the speech of the beloved so charming rasps harshly on the ear; the enchanting baby-talk sounds like drivelling idiocy; the needs of the loved one gape like the jaws of a trap; the warm and probing concern galls like a fetter.

Their own resentment bewilders them. The same peculiarities in others are found amusing. Why is it so difficult to accept them in the beloved? Because he is so close, because he is an alter ego? It is not enough to be plagued by the flaws discovered in each other. Feelings of guilt and remorse also harass the soul; because of the injustice of this resentment, because the other cannot help being what he is. On top of this is the humiliating consciousness that one is also standing in an unfavorable light and being appraised with a jaundiced eye.

Some people are led to believe from these symptoms that love has died. Women, especially, are prone to look back on past ardors and try to revive them by fanning back the flames. This is a mistake. The woman who is always reminding her husband of his courtship and early marriage is playing a false tune that jars mercilessly on his nerves. Anniversaries are good, and symbols of deep affection and devotion should be exchanged. But they should be living symbols, not relics from the past. It is better on these occasions to emphasize the supernatural end of their union, to repeat their holy vows, to dedicate themselves anew to God and each other, and to live their union in its present state, than to dwell on the archaic highlights of its history. The love they have for each other now, however arid, however "unromantic," is better than any glittering ghost evoked by artifice from the past.

Complications from Without

It is at this critical period that most of the extraneous attacks on the union take place. This is one of God's therapeutic measures. It has the effect of binding the couple together, if only for the sake of expediency. They must form a united front against the world. They must stand together before their in-laws. They must be as one before their children. They must cling to each other before the fearsome presence of God. In the press of their active duties and obligations, a rhythm of work and prayer is established between them, and, slowly but surely, their secret incompatibilities merge into the rhythm. Humility steps in. Per-

spective is restored, and with it the grace of the sense of humor. The mountains of discord dwindle to normal grain-of-sand size and are overlaid with the nacre of sympathy. They become the first pearls of wisdom.

Some of the extraneous attacks come directly from the hand of God—among them those endowed with so much compensation that they can be written off on the credit side of the ledger, such as the strain of creative toil and the pains of childbirth. But there are others: sudden catastrophes, chronic and incurable illnesses, the death of a child. I do not believe there is a Catholic couple anywhere who does not know, at least in theory, how to meet these reverses. And all who have actually experienced them know that the mutual acceptance of such sorrow has brought them closer to God, closer to each other, and closer to their trouble-seasoned neighbors.

Some of the ordeals come less directly, through society: separation because of wars and political and economic upheavals; the claims of in-laws on old allegiances; unemployment; penury; inadequate housing; minority group discrimination; a stepped-up pace in living that interferes with the metabolism of marriage; infringement by the state on their rights as parents over their children; the imposition of false values; false philosophies, such as puritanism and its antipode, naturalism; the notion that there is no difference in function between the two sexes. Through our society, too, come temptations against the holiness of marriage: frivolous social ambitions that suck like parasites on the family income; the pressure of world censure against the fruitful fulfillment of the marriage act; temptations to escape responsibilities by drowning them in drink; temptations against marital fidelity.

These trials, in a society that has literally gone off its base, give rise to such bitterness as to set the institution of marriage rocking on its foundation. The non-Catholic world has thrown in the sponge. Divorce is a recognized, respected, and dignified way out. Most Catholics thus besieged hold out, but in some cases with a grimness that attests only to the letter of the law; the spirit seems crushed and mangled. And yet, I have seen old people, veterans of this staunch and grisly heroism, inconsolable at the death of a partner long suffered with acid endurance. So unfathomably deep went the roots of their mysterious union that they were unaware of them until the lightning-stroke of death unearthed them—suddenly split apart.

The attacks of an ailing society upon marriage, in spite of their malevolence, can also be used to toughen the sinews of the

conjugal bond. Resistance to these evils makes the man and woman conscious of their dependence upon each other. They have to draw on each other for courage and understanding and compassion, and bolster up each other's weaknesses. They learn to look within themselves for additional resources, and, lacking them, turn to God. It is good if they do this together. But even if only one of them does, he will find there an abundance of strength to make up for the other's deficiency, a wealth of charity to cover the other's spiritual nakedness.

Furthermore, in their resistance, the couple must devise ways to protect their children from the poisonous breath that blows upon them from a corrupt society. The traditional means is a close integration of the family with the life of the parish. Where the stench of putrefaction from without is so strong as to threaten to paralyze the vitality of parish life, some couples are pioneering on new frontiers. They are joining forces with other families in the same predicament as themselves, uniting in communities bound together by liturgical and sacramental living, and so creating centers of sanity in an insane world.

Complications from Within

The gravest threat to marriage comes neither directly nor indirectly from God, but rises up out of the dark reservoirs of evil that lie in every human soul. Particular dispositions to error can create serious friction. Lack of consideration; a mischievous tongue; the pride that refuses to say, "I'm sorry, it was my fault," or says it in such a satirical tone it might better be left unsaid; the hungry eyes that want everything they see; immoderate sensual appetites; explosive tempers; lack of compassion and tenderness; jealousy, stinginess; shiftlessness and laziness and lack of responsibility—these are dangerous household pets.

In the single life these tendencies, having only a relatively simple culture-medium in which to flourish, and lacking the informed beacon light provided by the eyes of the beloved, may sometimes pass unnoticed. But the intimacy of married life provides a double-strength hot-bed for their cultivation, and the lover can see his soul, with all its shortcomings, reflected in the other's eyes. And if his powers of perception are not sufficiently acute, his mate can be trusted to provide corrective lenses for his edification, together with sound-track commentary. It is all very painful. Yet people who have never practiced self-discipline until their marriage have been known to begin on a remodelling job, out of the sheer urgency for self-respect.

Mortal sin creates the worst havoc. A person in this state is wretched. Nothing he does comes out right. Nothing his partner can do for him can alleviate his misery, which he will attribute to any cause rather than the right one. He is blinded and confused by the dark void within him. Because of the intolerable vacuum in which he moves he makes exorbitant and unreasonable demands upon his partner.

The "innocent" one suffers too, for in marriage there can be no illusion of the private sin that hurts no one but the sinner. Its effects are too immediate—too crippling. By virtue of the Sacrament they have conferred upon each other, man and woman have become two vital organs of Christ's body, intimately co-ordinated. He who lives in their love hangs in agony between them, with the ageless cry on His lips: "They have pierced My Hands and My Feet. . ." The extinguishing of spiritual life in one causes a fearful paralysis in the other. The avenue through which the latter sought and found his God has been impenetrably blocked and choked. He finds himself alone, with a loneliness all the more terrible because he must share it with a stranger.

In seeking a way out of his predicament he is tempted to cover himself with the mantle of his innocence, cry out with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and harden his heart against his erring spouse. This is wrong, for it identifies the person he is *bound to love* with the evil committed and blinds him to the ills that infest his own soul, to the possibility of seeing there the defects that may have driven the other to sin. It is the recourse of the Pharisee. Mauriac has shown its calcifying effects in his *Vipers' Tangle*.

True, the Church grants separation to couples in cases that have reached the stage where cohabitation is at the time inadvisable. However, whether it is a disciplinary measure to bring the sinner to his senses, or a means of protecting the family from outright brutality, it must be remembered that the separation can only be a physical one. It in no way dispenses the parties from their moral obligation to "have care for one another." However long it lasts, it should always be regarded as a temporary expedient, to be abandoned as soon as the cause is eradicated.

Another procedure is to stand by and reproach the transgressor, to assume the task of disciplinarian. One may feel very virtuous in this role, for of course to admonish the sinner is one of the spiritual acts of mercy. But it must be done with great humility, great delicacy, and great care that love is not obscured by the act. Above all, there must be no machination, no manoever-

ing to take over the management of the other's life in order to obtain satisfactory results. The desire to "reform" another can create unbearable tensions, even lead to neurosis.

Sometimes a sin, such as drunkenness, if repeated in spite of obvious attempts at rehabilitation, really has its roots in neurosis. It would be wise for the spouse of such a victim to meditate on Christ's love for sinners, and to realize that the neurotic, because of the effort he is making, however often he fails, may be much closer to God than the paragon of virtue.

This does not mean closing one's eyes to vice, or becoming indifferent to it. There is a depraved sort of love which looks upon the beloved as a god and approves of everything he does simply because it is he who does it—the sort of maudlin idolatry extolled in a gutter-ballad popular some years ago called *My Man*. The slavish acceptance of evil in the beloved makes one accessory to his sins. Only a world lost to every concept of right and wrong could take delight in such a diabolic parody of love.

There is no way around the problem of the refractory spouse. The only way out of it is through it. If the task seems to exhaust all one's resources of constancy and firmness and compassion, they can be replenished by furtive raids on the bank of God's mercy. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Where the will to persevere is sincere the necessary strength will be given.

We have examples of saints who converted their spouses—among them Saint Monica, who was doubly rewarded by the sanctity of her son. The neo-paganism of our day presents a different picture, of course. Many who live like pagans today have received the Sacrament of Baptism, and even that of Confirmation. Apostasy is worse than paganism because it is a rejection of Christ and His sacrifice. The mistresses Saint Monica's husband had could be forgiven him on the grounds that he knew no better. Modern man, scion of a society enlightened by Christ's revelations, cannot so lightly overlook his spouse's infidelity. New patterns must be created, new paths blazed out of the wilderness of evil in its contemporary aspect.

Here is where selfless love is put to the test. It is easy to say one is willing to die for the salvation of the beloved. The test is to be able to live with him day after day, seeing Christ in him through the leprosy that disfigures him; to hate sin without hating the sinner; to suffer with him in his chastisement, sharing with him cheerfully whatever social stigma he incurs; to remember the

terrible burden Christ assumed for all flesh, and, for His sake, to offer to do penance for the other's sins along with one's own.

This is to put on Christ, Who through the long history of His identity with the Church patiently endures the human foibles of her saints, joins with them in their struggles against evil, and immolates Himself ceaselessly for her sinners. Marriage is a reproduction, in miniature, of His holy fusion with the Church. Bearing one another's burdens may be tedious, but refusal to do so is so monstrous it amounts to a betrayal of vocation. If anyone should say "this is too much," he does not know the meaning of love, for when has Love drawn the line to cry "enough, no more"? Moreover, to refuse this cross is to reject God's invitation to true happiness.

The Illuminative Stage

As long as happiness is strained for, it will remain elusive, for the pursuit of happiness is essentially selfish. True charity seeks only to be of service, asks only to be used. In marriage its reward is a sense of accomplishment, the feeling of being an instrument in the creation of something worthwhile, of being caught up and integrated in the profound mystery of production and growth. This is the illuminative stage when the joys of home life, with all its bustling activities, are really experienced, when nothing is too small or ridiculous to find its place—from the antics of their youngest to the curious pattern of sunshine on the wall, when each acknowledges gratefully the other's companionship and partnership, and desires his complete happiness.

The Unitive Stage

The unitive stage of any love can be striven for, but no amount of striving can bring it about. Marriage, viewed as a means of rising to God, is a purgation in all its stages. It is only on the level where human relations are concerned that one can speak of rising to the stage of unity. It is God's gift, to be bestowed or withheld, as He wills. The wonder is that it is given—this side of Heaven.

In all human affinities, with one exception, the unitive stage is marked by a certain detachment, an objectiveness, an awareness of the *otherness* of the loved person, a reserve of one's innermost sanctuary. As we have seen in the child-parent relationship, the movement toward maturity is centrifugal. Marriage is the exception. It is uniquely subjective, because of its sacramental nature, and intensely centripetal because of its transcendental nature. It is invested with an intrinsic holiness that alone can bear the weight of human attachment. From the moment of their espousal its

participants are stamped with the mark of its binding solidarity. It is therefore imperative to make a distinction between the inherent unitive *state* of this relation and its extrinsic "unitive" *stage*.

Perhaps an analogy between the Sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony will best serve the purpose. In Baptism Christ is intimately wedded with the soul, which He signs indelibly with the seal of His Humanity. Sin may sever the union, but nothing can erase the divine signature. It is incumbent upon the Christian to participate *actively*, through the right exercise of his free will, in the mysterious efficacy of this union in order to attain sanctity. In marriage two souls are joined in a bond which partakes of the essence of Baptism. Some couples, deeply imbued with the Christian concept of marriage, like the parents of Saint Therese of Lisieux, may be able to taste the full implications of their union at the very outset. They may endure only a brief "purgative" period, or none at all. But most couples accept its supernatural significance on faith, in a sort of spiritual twilight. They must grope their way through to integral communion.

At the time of their nuptials bride and groom stand together at the altar like two sacred chalices, filled with the sacramental wine of their oblation. The purgative period of their marriage marks the emptying of each chalice into the other. The man pours out his strength, his creative genius, his protective power; the woman her receptiveness, her obedience, her intuitive spirit. When the last drop of self has been immolated the unitive stage has arrived.

They have participated in Christ's crucifixion during the dark night. Now they share in His resurrection. They, too, have risen above their own natures. Having begun by loving a hidden Christ through each other, they now love each other through the risen God Who has revealed Himself to them in their suffering. Cleansed of delusion, they see each other clearly, no longer as ideal beings, or as distorted strangers, but as creatures formed by the Living Trinity from whom both have their essence, still made of flesh, but impregnated by the Holy Spirit.

Although the movement of their devotion is concentric, its effects are diffusive. Just as their love for each other is now an overflow of their love of God, Who is the Center of their unity, so their love for their children, their families and their neighbors radiates from the steady flame of which they are the fuel.

They have fought the good fight, they have kept the faith, they have weathered the storm. Each is now firmly anchored in the other, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. The man can lose

himself in his work, his community can absorb him. The woman can spend herself on her children, her home, the demands of her neighbors. Their activities may be multiple and separate. It does not matter. Everything they do stems from their union, and returns to it, replenishing it. Whatever hardship assails them, it cannot touch their deep contentment. Each has found his place in God's sight—the inmost core of the other's being. Having stripped themselves of all that is inimical to their union, they find perfect freedom within the sealed temple of each other's body, mind, soul. There, in the high noon of their oneness, they worship the gracious Guest Who has kept the good wine for the last.

WINIFRED AUSTIN

THE PARADOX OF FAILURE



CHARLOT

The Apostolic Spirit of Charles De Foucauld

After Joan of Arc the most popular religious figure in France today is Charles de Foucauld, who died thirty-five years ago as a priest and a solitary in the Sahara Desert. In one sense his story is an echo of all stories of prodigals. Born to money and position, with charm and intelligence, he became a profligate, slothful, gluttonous (in the most refined way), unchaste and disobedient. Then he was reconverted to Christianity and lived a progressively more penitential and contemplative existence until he was killed by Arabs during the first World War, possibly dying as a martyr. In another sense however, his is not just an old though heroic story, but a model of spirituality and apostolicity for our own day. This is the real reason for his popularity.

Charles de Foucauld's apostolate was among the Moslems, whose fanatical resistance to Christianity prevented any direct efforts at conversion. In Europe and America we are often faced with a similar situation—more often than we wish to admit. Communists and others who have made a religion of materialism and secularism are almost impervious to argumentation. So are Negroes living under an accumulation of injustice and ignorance and squalor. It seems as though the modern world is not going to be converted by pat apologetics, by a little money, by a little kindness, or by some belated reparation in the social order. Those who realize that in their particular field of work they are up against this advanced situation look to Charles de Foucauld for a suitable type of spirituality and apostolate. Several congregations have been formed since his death to work according to a rule which he outlined for the followers who failed to appear in his lifetime. They are the Little Brothers of the Sacred Heart, the Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and the Little Sisters of Jesus. They are working, some in Africa and some in France, and are still experimenting with this new approach. (Ed. Note)

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With certain reservations, one can see in Charles de Foucauld a synthesis of the monasticism of Tibet and that of the West; like the monks of the East, he retired to the desert and shut himself up in a cloister; yet, like the monks of the West, he wished to act

on the people around him, first by example, then by actual contact, and a civilizing influence.

This is merely an approximation; in reality the apostolate of Charles de Foucauld is new and original. Its aim is to sanctify a country by the multiplication of tabernacles, to be a living witness to the Gospel by leading the hidden life of Nazareth.

What were the influences that shaped this apostolic ideal? This question is not completely answerable. It would be necessary to penetrate the mysteries of divine vocation and the unsearchable riches of divine grace to formulate an adequate answer. However, some factors are discernible.

In its purely *interior* aspect the apostolate of Charles de Foucauld coincides with his spirituality. It has its roots deep in the Gospel and the burning zeal of the heart of Christ. By its insistence on the silent but powerful influence of the Eucharist and the example of a hidden life, his apostolate is original and corresponds to his special vocation.

In its *exterior* aspect (linguistic preparation, methods of making contact and so forth) it not only resembles the apostolate of the White Fathers among the Mussulmans, it stems from it and borrows some of its features. During his entire life as a hermit in the Sahara (1901 to 1916) Father de Foucauld lived under the jurisdiction of the Prefect Apostolic of the Sahara, eagerly seeking his directives and thoroughly discussing methods of the apostolate with him. Each year he went up to Ghardaia for Confession and to renew contact with the White Fathers. He paid many visits to their Mother House at Maison-Carrée, where he consulted his last spiritual director, the Very Reverend Paul Vaillard, first assistant to the General. He always was happy to have the White Fathers and White Sisters around him.

The Primacy of God

The apostolate of Charles de Foucauld remains faithful to the deepest meaning of the Incarnation; it is above all supernatural, yet plunges deeply into the human by its adaptation to its surroundings. Are not these the two essential conditions mentioned by Pope Pius XII, December 8, 1950, on the occasion of the Congress on "The States of Perfection"?

Charles de Foucauld always gives as the primary aim of his presence in the Sahara that of sanctifying the most abandoned peoples by *the presence of the most Holy Eucharist*, that is, by God Himself, by the Real Presence, by the Holy Sacrifice, by the prayer of the Church, which derives its value from Christ. The most complete text is found in a letter of April 3, 1906:

My work here, alas, is but a work of preparation, of breaking ground. The first thing is to place Christ in their midst, Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament, Christ coming down each day in the Holy Sacrifice; it is also to pray in their midst the prayer of the Church, however weak the one who offers it.

That is certainly an *original apostolate*. There is no true apostolate that is not founded on God. But he has pushed this principle to the limit. In a country where there were no missionaries and no converts, he wished to sanctify and prepare conversions primarily and at first solely by the presence of Christ, the Eucharistic Victim.

A Question of Being Rather Than Doing

Against an excessive preoccupation with works, a sort of existentialism in the sphere of the apostolate, His Holiness Pope Pius XII, in the address cited above, recalled the necessity of uniting an interior life to apostolic action. This is the voice of the whole Christian tradition; Cardinal Lavigerie, speaking to his first missionaries, said: "The sanctity of the apostle is the condition of a fruitful apostolate."

Charles de Foucauld expressed this same truth with an insistence that might seem excessive to some. We quote two texts characteristic of his thought and worthy of attention by the modern world:

In trying to do for our neighbor the good that God wishes us to do for him, let us use all the means that He has placed at our disposal, always including prayer (which is our most powerful means of action), but above all, above all, above all, we must become saints, for to become a saint oneself is so powerful a means of sanctifying one's neighbor that all other means are as nothing in comparison. With personal sanctity, all other means, no matter how weak in themselves, take on an incomparable power. The slightest word, example, or prayer works an infinite good for souls. Without personal sanctity, all the efforts of the world, all the zeal, all the eloquence, all the example, all the prayers are ineffectual. Let us sanctify ourselves; it is by this means that we shall sanctify others. Our Savior reminds us by His own example. It is by sanctity, He says, that He has sanctified men and not by His other works, however perfect, however powerful, however divine they might have been. "I sanctify myself for them that they might be sanctified" (*Nouveaux Ecrits Spirituels*, pp. 167-168).

Charles de Foucauld wrote these words at Nazareth (before settling in Africa). Twelve years later, at Tamanrasset, he was equally insistent in defining the primary characteristic of the apostolate.

The good we do is not in proportion to what we say and what we do—but

In proportion to what we are,

In proportion to the grace that accompanies our actions,

In proportion as Jesus abides in us,

In proportion as our actions are the actions of Jesus working in and through us.

The degree of our personal sanctification will be that produced through our prayers, our penances, our example, our charitable acts and zealous works.

The fundamental thing to do in order to be useful to souls is to work continuously with all our energy at the task of our own conversion.

The good we do will be in proportion to our own sanctity. We must have this truth constantly before us. (*Directoire*, Art. XXVIII, 3.)

Bearing Witness

As Pius XII recalled at the beginning of his pontificate, the most urgent task for Catholics in an age of publicity and propaganda is to bear witness, not with their words, but with their lives.

This is even truer in a de-Christianized country and especially in a country whose beliefs are completely opposed to Catholicism, as in North Africa. There, bearing witness is the sole means of preaching; but to bear witness one must be that for which one witnesses. The true witness of Christ is he who is the faithful image of Christ, he who makes impossible Ghandi's cutting remark: "I love Jesus Christ, I do not love Christians."

Such, then, was the primary exterior means of Charles de Foucauld's apostolate: "I wish to proclaim the Gospel in my life," he said, and he succeeded. A witness of his life, Major Hérisson, a Protestant, has written: "Father de Foucauld, unlike most celebrated men, increased immeasurably in grandeur the more intimately one came into daily contact with him."

Such also was his ideal for the Brothers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

By their example, the Brothers and Sisters should be a living sermon; each of them should be a model of the

evangelical life. Seeing them, one should see what Christian life is, what the Christian religion is, what the Gospel is, what Jesus is. The difference between their lives and the lives of non-Christians should reveal forcefully where the truth lies. They should be a living Gospel; persons far from Christ, and especially the infidels, should, without books and without words, come to know the Gospel by simply watching their lives (*Directoire*, Art. XXVIII, 6).

The obligation to bear witness, according to Charles de Foucauld, falls not alone on priests and religious but also on the laity, as a letter of March 11, 1909, attests.

Adaptation

Two things help explain the apostolic method of Charles de Foucauld. One was personal; he did not believe that he was called to preaching and a public life. The other was general, dictated by the type of people among whom he was living, one which determines the nature of the apostolate of the White Fathers among the Moslems even to this day. "Direct evangelization is impossible at this time," he wrote in a letter dated October 1, 1906. His method is expressed in three words: brotherly contact, intellectual preparation for the apostolate, action through culture and civilization.

Brotherly Contact

From the moment of his arrival in the Sahara, while still living a cloistered life, Charles de Foucauld received the natives. It was at Beni-Abbes that he wrote:

I wish to accustom all the inhabitants, Christians, Moslems, Jews, idolators, to look upon me as their brother, their universal brother. I am delighted that they have started calling the house "the Fraternity." It is a beehive from five till nine in the morning and from four till eight in the evening. I am continually seeing and talking with people—slaves, the poor, and the sick.

At Tamanrasset, where there was no cloister, he went looking for contacts, engaging in a round of visits, and purposely entered into the life of the native Touaregs. His apostolate was under the sign of Our Lady's Visitation.

This marked a real evolution, inspired by the full flowering of love and the fulfillment of his vocation. From this point forward his cloister was interior, it was his union with God. In 1907 he could still write, "I am a monk and not a missionary." In 1911 he modified it to "a missionary-monk." And in 1916, the year of his death, he wrote: "*Missionaries* as isolated as I am

are rare . . . My whole life consists in being as close as possible to those around me, rendering whatever service I can."

The Intellectual Preparation of the Missionary

Charles de Foucauld demanded of all the Brothers and Sisters an extensive knowledge of religion. In Article XIX of his *Directoire*, he wrote:

It is indispensable for them to be solidly instructed so that they may reply surely, clearly, promptly, briefly, peremptorily, to the questions asked of them; they should know how indispensable it is for them, if they are to benefit infidels and Christians who have been away from Confession, to have at their finger-tips, not only the teachings of moral theology, but also those of dogmatic theology, of moral philosophy, and even, at times, of the other parts of philosophy.

He also recommends that in their formation they use "the best authors, the saintliest, the most authoritative, the most Roman," and suggests Saint Thomas, Saint Therese, Saint John of the Cross, Saint John Chrysostom.

Further, those who work directly in infidel environments "need special knowledge, knowledge about the infidel people." Charles de Foucauld himself gave an example of this type of knowledge. Ever in contact with the infidels, his notebook always in his hand, he acquired a profound knowledge of the Touaregs, of their language, folk lore and customs. In ten years he accomplished a scientific work in grammar, lexicography, collections of poetry and translations that a scholar with nothing else to do would have found difficult to finish in the same amount of time. So valuable was his work that several of the manuscripts have been published at the expense of the French government.

Action through Culture and Civilization

Charles knew through contact with his predecessors in the field, the White Fathers, that the direct preaching of the Gospel to the Mussulmans required a long preparation aimed at removing their prejudices. While Cardinal Lavigerie had recommended a direct apostolate to the missionaries he sent to the black countries, which in seventy years have produced three million Christians and a native Hierarchy, he required the missionaries to Musselmamic countries to limit themselves to an external apostolate, the establishment of dispensaries and schools, to visits and friendly conversations. At present, they have added a review, *Institut des Belles Œuvres Arabes*, cultural centers that bring together Catholics and Moslems, a budding university.

Forty years after Cardinal Lavigerie, Charles de Foucauld wrote:

The work to be done here, as with all Moslems, is a work of moral uplift. We must use every means to elevate them morally as well as intellectually; to get close to them, to make contact with them, to become their friends; to destroy their prejudices by daily friendly relations, to modify their ideas by conversation and example; to provide them with instruction in the proper sense, and then with a complete education; to educate them in schools and colleges; to impart to them by close daily association what one learns only within the family—to re-make the family. When this has been accomplished, their ideas will be infinitely modified, their morals improved, and their passage to the Gospel will be facilitated. (*Lettres inédites du Pere de Foucauld*, pp. 44-45).

The Co-operation of Christians, and the Lay Apostolate

Charles de Foucauld is undoubtedly a pioneer of the lay apostolate. We could quote in its entirety a letter written on March 11, 1909, to the Abbé Caron, but it is too long. We give a few of the leading ideas.

A Strict Duty

The duty of evangelizing the infidel rests on the faithful in Christian lands. In the twentieth century, more than ever, this has become a strict duty of all the faithful . . . at every point on the globe contact exists between the infidels and the Europeans.

He goes on to explain that this contact can take place from afar, as it were, by prayer, by gifts, and by fostering missionary vocations. But his vision is grander.

Co-operation on the Spot

Material gifts alone are not enough in working for the conversion of the infidels; it is much more important to establish excellent Christians of every condition of life in the midst of these people to be supports of the missionaries, to lead the infidels to the faith by their goodness, their example, their presence . . . to be lay missionaries to the most abandoned sheep of the flock.

This is the Christian witness carried into the mission fields. And Charles shows how necessary this lay presence is—they are in closer contact with the native population, they inspire less dis-

trust.

Their lay state inspires no distrust in the matter of religion. And if they are married, doors are open to them that would be closed to others. . . . The married state would make possible for them daily familiar contacts that would be most fruitful and yet would be impossible for regular religious.

His vision extends even further. From Tamanrasset he wrote on April 20, 1906:

Lay Missionaries

If Jesus should place in your way young girls or widows who desire to dedicate themselves completely to Jesus without entering a convent or donning a religious habit and who wish to devote themselves to Jesus as nurses in this lost land, please let me know about them. . . . I am sure I could lead them to some place in the Sahara where they could live a life of hidden adoration of Christ in the Host and devote themselves to alleviating the material miseries of these savage peoples. They could lead a life completely hidden in Jesus and still remain lay people.

The Pertinence of Charles de Foucauld

Although the following conclusions flow almost automatically from what has been written, we may be permitted to present them schematically and thus emphasize the pertinence of Charles de Foucauld's message.

The Apostolate

Against the danger of over-activity, Charles de Foucauld vigorously recalls the primacy of the interior life and of divine grace.

In the presence of the de-Christianized and infidel world, whose borders are ever extending, he affirms the missionary duty of every Christian and appeals for lay missionaries.

In the presence of opinions blunted by propaganda he calls on all Christians to bear witness by their lives.

At a time when the missionary is tempted to become almost bourgeois in his mode of life, and an excessively psychological aspect of vocation is stressed, he appeals to divine vocation and a complete security in fulfilling the designs of God, Whose grace becomes each day more demanding on those who know how to listen to and follow its mounting demands.

Finally, the three congregations founded by Charles de Foucauld seem to be perfectly adapted to the needs of the modern world: the members are contemplative, yet they must be closely associated with their lay confreres (workers' fraternities, missionary fraternities) and live by the labor of their own hands.

Modern Tendencies

Faced with atheistic materialism, Charles de Foucauld insists on the meaning of God and adoration.

Faced with exaggerated mechanization and the accelerated pace of life, he calls us to the simplicity of the hidden life of Nazareth.

Faced with the inordinate taste for comfort and luxury, he emphasizes the poverty and renouncement of Nazareth.

Against the exaltation of the senses and the craving for pleasure, he gives an example of a complete victory over sensuality.

To the masses of workers, he recalls their dignity, by giving a concrete example through his imitation of the "poor Worker of Nazareth."

Against religious conformism, against the regimentation of thought and of the masses, he recalls us to a personal religious life, rooted in meditation, profoundly lived, which is the enemy of regimentation and routine.

Against the forces which tend to destroy the family, by his example and in his writings he gives us the Holy Family as a model.

Where hate and egotism divide nations, the "universal brother" recalls us to the Absolute and the universality of Christian love, which by preference extends to the most abandoned peoples.

Where persecution weighs heavily on entire populations, he gives us the example of his heroism in life and in the face of death. His martyr soul urges us to the greatest act of love.

Finally, against every evil, he preaches a return to the Gospel. "The danger is *in us* and not in our enemies. Our enemies can do nothing but provide us with victories. The evil cannot touch us except through our own fault. Return to the Gospel, that is the remedy."

The General Christian Scene

Here the message of Charles de Foucauld is especially contemporary—it is the message of the Gospel, it is a spirituality for laity as well as for priests and religious (most of his writings antedate his elevation to the priesthood).

This message has been delivered to us by a witness who lived in our own time, who was subject to the same passions as ourselves. It was delivered to us by the Prodigal Son of modern times who became an image of the Firstborn Son and a model for us all.

ANTONIN CORNUEJOLS, W.F.

Marriage and Spirituality

I have a friend who is a career-girl, single and very attractive. Marriage, she says, is not her dish of tea. All of which annoys most of her female friends and they are forever trying to expose her to the right kind of man and what they call her kind of marriage, ever hopeful that someday it will take. "Jane," they say, "you just don't understand how wonderful marriage can be. You haven't seen the right kind of marriages—or you wouldn't be so hard to convince."

So it was no surprise to have them descend one day with the announcement that "this is it"—they had the perfect couple lined up and all she had to do was meet them and she'd be converted. She met them and marvelled at how they were, indeed, perfect in every way—charming, devoted, beautifully adjusted, living in the perfect apartment, he the perfect provider and she the perfect homemaker and companion. It was too good to be true and for the first time she was ready to concede that marriage didn't necessarily have to be more bickering than bliss.

Then several months later the man phoned with the shattering announcement that things were about to crack up. Would she come and talk to the light of his life? He had taken a severe beating in the market, their finances had done a right-about-face and suddenly, life was real, life was earnest. He was able to bear up under it, but apparently she wasn't, and what with having to give up a few pleasures and buckle down to a job, she was about ready to fly the coop. Jane was a working girl and happy in her job, maybe it would help if she'd give her a career-girl-type of pep talk. So Jane hiked over one night to listen to the whole tale of woe. This is how it went:

"My dear, you can't know what a mess it all is. I hate working, but I have to or we can't live the way we do, and Jack simply doesn't understand what it's doing to me. Then to complicate things even more, his mother's been here for two weeks and I had to move all my clothes out and take a temporary apartment downstairs."

"Why the apartment downstairs? Don't tell me you can't put up with your mother-in-law for just two weeks?"

"My mother-in-law?" and the other woman screamed. "Oh darling! You don't understand—we aren't even married!"

A Holy Vocation

Marriage is a *spiritual union*. People can do all the things that are permitted in marriage outside of marriage—and there is

no union. The whole thing hangs together because God says it does, and He feeds it a special kind of grace, grace reserved for the married alone, then He tells them what they are to be to one another, and He says that doing these things, they will give honor and glory to Him, for which reason He created them in the first place. He says the whole thing, from falling in love and making the decision to marry, to exchanging vows and giving each other freely in physical union, and to the ultimate end of the physical union, the bearing of children—all this, He says, is a holy vocation, a *calling* through which He calls us to Himself. This is how the married serve God—and it differs from any other vocation because it depends upon your loving and serving first of all one specific person, a husband or a wife, and secondly these specific children—and the love that is perfected in the service of these is the love we will know for all men.

But it's not easy, being married. It looks easy because we find our way to it through a series of shattering experiences with physical attraction (I do not mean sin—but just the discovery that we are capable of wanting to possess someone, and be possessed, in the full physical sense of the word) and because we know it first in the terms of physical love, we are apt to measure love forever after in these same terms. It isn't that at all. Physical love imitates God's love for the soul; when it is pure, it is good. After all, God invented it and all through Scripture His love for His Church is described in what some souls consider the most shocking physical language. All you have to do is read the Cantic of Canticles to come away with the conviction that God knows all about physical love and with the conviction that it's a pretty exalted thing. It's an exalted thing precisely because it is an imitation of an exalted thing—call it a facet of an exalted thing—but it is not the whole, nor will it last forever. Even in marriages that are unmarred by more than just ordinary every-day trials, it peters out, the passion is spent and the fires banked and it becomes obvious that it has been only a means and not an end. It is a kind of *hors d'oeuvre*—a hint of things to come. It hints of a love that is waiting to be found but which, for lack of other words, must be described in the terms of physical desire.

We ought to know all this when we realize that physical love is easy—you literally "fall" into it. Those whose vocation is marriage do not have to sit down and talk to themselves into falling in love. It happens without any very apparent reason. And even for those who have not had the benefit of clinical texts on how to go about the specific act of nuptial love-making, instinct

tells them what it is all about. Along with this, there goes with that first impassioned desire to possess and be possessed an equally impassioned desire to serve. Nothing is too much for the beloved, nothing too good. Nothing can be asked of us that we would not already want to give. All happiness is bound up in the happiness of the beloved and there is none outside of him. He is perfect—if not quite perfect, at least unique—and no one else is the combination of humor and wisdom and kindness and beauty as he. Foolish? Of course it is foolish, in a way. No one is that perfect. But that is how love makes people look perfect, and it's a very good thing, because one ought not go about getting married to merely a physique. These are the spiritual qualities we see, and this is the first step toward spiritual love. That is why it is all wrong to pooh-pooh physical love—it is an uncanny imitation of spiritual love and for some people (those called to marriage) it is the way to spiritual love.

So—we get married, and life is going to be beer and skittles ever after. Of course there's that little matter of "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health," but who cares? To people who love each other as we do, nothing can make any difference. We are two minds with but a single thought—that we love each other. Whatever differences there are between us are the happy physical differences—they merely complement each other. Our marriage is going to be different from any other we are going to be the exception. We both understand that we are called to be saints—we will be saints together. We have found a framework designed by God in which we can give ourselves to each other and still give ourselves to God. How easy!

What a sweet delirium—and God is kind to permit it. Because without the sweetness and the convictions, we would never have the courage to start. It is like the first abandon of a soul completely converted to a desire for nothing but God's will. I remember talking to a friend once and telling her that was how we had to love God's will—with abandon. And she said, hesitantly, "Yes—but I'm afraid. Afraid that if I do, He'll start doing a lot of hard things to me." That is like almost being in love but not quite, because once you are—even if there is a small voice (or some small words: for better, worse, richer, poorer, sickness, health) you throw yourself into it with the conviction that love will make these things easy. And *spiritual* love does—that is where physical love is supposed to lead us. That is why it is no exaggeration at all to say that, for all its physical form, marriage is a spiritual life.

Growth in Holiness

Now spiritual growth depends on a lot of different things. It depends on prayer, vocal and mental, on meditation and contemplation, on attendance at Mass and the Sacraments, on spiritual reading, and particularly on a variety of forms of doing violence to one's self. And all these things are necessary to the development of anyone's spiritual life, no matter what his vocation. *But* the means to these things differ widely, and are governed by the mold of each vocation, and in no vocation, I am sure, is the spiritual life molded by things so much of the earth, earthy, as in marriage. The odor of sanctity, in marriage, is a distinct odor all its own—and only God could recognize it as such. To most ordinary noses it is a trying combination of burned toast and tobacco smoke and cooked cabbage and diaper pails, and a lot of other things too numerous and ridiculous to mention, with nothing whatsoever to indicate to the innocent bystander that these are the means to sanctification. Fasts and penances may be the way for the religious, and ministering to God's poor for the rich, preaching God's Word and performing God's Sacraments for the clergy, but for the married, it is embracing what is there to be done within the four walls of their home.

Mortification

Take my good and noble husband, for instance, and the matter of mortification. Little did he, a man of delicate tastes and even more delicate digestion, realize that when he took unto himself a wife she would present him in no time at all with an array of children who, God be praised, would be fine and healthy and need their pants changed often. Nor would she rest there, but having decided to keep children, she must also decide to keep coats. However, never let it be said that the Lord is stingy with grace. My husband has met and conquered in the struggle with the concupiscence of the senses. His nose is at last mortified.

But it does not end there. Having become perfectly detached in the matter of what's in the breeze, this trial is exchanged for another which might be called "What's in a squeeze?" It all looked so providential at the time. The way the rider turned up, working the same shift, living on the same route—God shows His love in even the smallest things, we said, like figuring out a way to pay some of the expenses on the car. Ah yes—and whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth! So the providentially discovered rider turns out to be a man who sucks oranges! And into the furnace for Newland—this time it's his ears. Have you ever

driven mile after mile in the dead of night sitting beside a man who squeezes and sucks oranges? "Darling," I said, "offer it up."

"Brother—don't think I don't!"

I have a pretty pamphlet in front of me now, with oodles of rules in it for the Christian married, and aside from the dogma it repeats, the burden of success seems to rest on being clean and neat and dressing for dinner. Maybe we're screwy—but I can say I have ever measured an upsurge of love for my mate at the sight of his freshly shaved chin. However I have sat in the kitchen at one-thirty in the morning waiting for him to get home from work, and I have loved him more, whiskers and dirty shirt and all, because for the sake of our children and myself, he has put up once more with forty-five minutes with an orange-sucker.

Silence

So much for mortification, only one of the ingredients of the spiritual life. Next, at random, take silence. Silence for the married would seem to be impossible. You've got to talk to each other. But it has its place—and that is in refusing to quarrel. One of the first disagreements to raise its head in our married life has to do with where to sit in church. My husband was brought up sitting in the middle. I was brought up sitting in the front. He no matter how hard he tried, could not relax and pray in the front—he was overwhelmed by a sense of being on public display. He tried sitting in the middle and Mass became a kind of on-again-off-again peep show, which I attended while doing a ladylike buck and-wing. I peeked to the left, I peered to the right, I saw the Ordinary through this lady's veil, and the Canon over that lady's feathers. It was exhausting, and distracting, and completely unsatisfactory. I should add that Bill is over six feet tall and hats are no distraction for him. So sooner or later, I hate to admit it, we had words over it. How could he persist in sitting in the middle when I couldn't sit anywhere but in the front? And why didn't he want to sit in the front? It was only a matter of getting used to it—and if he loved God enough, surely he would want to sit in the front. Now this last doesn't follow at all, and it's a good thing, all the people who do love God don't want to sit in the front—there are only two front pews. But no—he was adamant. He could not pray in the front. He had a suggestion. Why didn't he continue to sit in the middle, and I continue to sit in the front? I was horrified—this was *awful!* We were *married*, we were supposed to be doing these things *together*. It all indicated, to me, something terribly wrong, and I plagued him unmercifully, with melancholy sighs and broad hints and the wrong kind of silence.

very Sunday after Mass. He, on the contrary, practised the right kind of silence and never rose to the bait. And then, one day, I overheard two women discussing us, with relish and licking their lips. “. . . and you know what? They never sit together at Mass! He sits in the front, and he sits in the back. I wonder why? ? ?” And I howled, the whole thing was too ridiculous and they’d never have believed the truth if I’d told them. From the gleam in their eyes I could tell they suspected all kinds of things—ultimately that we had separate bedrooms, I’m sure. I’d given a good imitation of a nagging wife and all for a difference in pews. Better to have kept the peace and accepted his very good reasons for sitting where he must, and waited for God to level the mountains and fill the valleys of our life together. As He has—in this regard. He has sent us a batch of children who *have* to sit in the front—they’re really too short to sit in the middle. And mine spouse faithfully escorts them up there every Sunday morning. Me? Do I now enjoy Mass in a spirit of deep recollection? Not at all—I’m busy keeping track of my children.

Prayer

Then there is the matter of prayer. Spirituality is dependent on prayer, so for the married, there must be much prayer. But one of the exasperating things about married life, after it is under way and the family begins to grow, is that there isn’t too much time for prayer—at least not vocal prayer. So prayer, in the main, must be for the married mental prayer—that running conversation with God which is so easy but seems to be, for far too many, shrouded in mystery—if indeed they have heard of it at all. That’s something I don’t understand, and don’t propose to waste time trying to figure out here. But I certainly think the news should be shouted from the housetops. Mental prayer is so simple it’s absurd—“lifting the heart and the mind to God.” It’s really, I think, the easiest form of prayer, and it’s a natural for the married. In times of crises, whether they know it or not, people will use it instinctively. Like a mother who is frantic, looking for her child; “Please, God, please, don’t let him be lost.” Why wait till then to start having your own kind of conversation with God? You can do it all day long, whenever you’re not having conversation with others. You find out after a while that it is so sweet that you’ll begin to cut down on your conversations with others—unnecessary conversations. And when you can’t employ mental prayer, you can employ whatever you are doing at the time as prayer. Contrarily enough, the more difficult a thing is to do, the more eloquent a prayer it makes. And it’s surprising the number

of things that will cease to be difficult once they have become prayer.

Penance

Then there is penance—another required subject in the pursuit of the spiritual life, and again, marriage is bursting with opportunities. In regard to penance, I am conducting a crusade—and to no avail at all—against hand lotions. All the propaganda put out by the makers and sellers of hand lotion makes me violently ill. Hand lotions will make or break the marriage, they shout. Ha! Hand lotions will make or break the makers of hand lotions—and no one else. Your husband will hate your raw red hands, they insist. Whose husband? Not mine. I don't hate the sight of his hands, up to and above his wrists hanging out of the too-short sleeves of a jacket he's been wearing for years. Certainly it hurts his pride, but it serves as a very good penance. I don't think, when I see them, "How horrible—so ill-fitting." They are more usefully occupied, even when they are just hanging limp, than a lot of hands in a lot of nicely tailored sleeves. And he doesn't think, when he sees my red hands in winter, "Disgusting—love is out the window." Of course if he did, I wouldn't do it—I'd even succumb to using the hand lotions because one of the things a woman must do for her husband is try to look the way he wants her to look. But my husband happens to think that when Our Lady warned *Do Penance*—she meant penance. And if it's hand lotions versus penance, "then on you honey, penance looks good." Before anyone gets the idea that I'm trying to paint a picture of us that is too-too noble, let me hasten to remind them that the idea isn't original with us. There is nothing so noble about penance. *Penance is due*. The whole idea originated with Jesus (and He was doing it for us). With Him it wasn't too short sleeves, or chapped skin, with Him it was nails.

Poverty

And all this brings us to poverty. There are vocations within vocations, if that makes sense, and it is easy to see them in marriage. For instance, some families' vocation is poverty—and the wolf is hanging around the door on and off all their life long. With other families, it's sickness, and they have periodic brushes with death all their life long. For some, it's public scandal, and for others it's wealth—with the contingent obligation to provide for the poor. All of them lead souls to God, only along different paths. With us, up to now, it's been poverty; Holy Church makes us hopeful when she calls it "holy poverty."

It's not like the poverty of the religious—we took no special vow, except that “richer-poorer” part of the marriage vow. So I can't truthfully say that we embraced holy poverty. Rather, holy poverty embraced us. There was no doubt God wanted her to embrace us. At the time, you don't see too clearly why—except that it's His will and you pray for the grace to love it. Afterwards you can look back and see very clearly why—a lot of reasons why—but outstanding among them all is this: that it takes trial to teach you to love each other spiritually, trial to teach you to love God—and most of all, trial to teach you how God loves you. Isn't it a paradox?

One of the things that makes it difficult to adjust to poverty, even the idea of poverty, is that poverty is so embarrassing. This is not an age that sees Christ in the poor, and poverty never looks providential, just improvident. And the first step along the path is to do a general housecleaning in the matter of values; it helps to have the Gospels in hand. That was where our values had got themselves distorted. We had a fair-to-middling acquaintance with what Christ said in the Gospels, but having never been pushed to apply it much, it was so much pretty poetry. “Consider the lilies of the field” had never moved us to the point of ecstasy. But when the screws begin to tighten, one is apt to go rushing about looking for answers. We prayed like mad, and it had no effect on the onrushing poverty. We tried to “help ourselves”—after all God helps those, etc. But to no avail. We kept a stiff upper lip, and a brave front before our family and friends. All it seemed, from both inside and out, was that we weren't smart enough, didn't know the right angles, or if we did, hadn't tried them. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, so we ventured the right angles. And poverty crept closer and closer. And then one night, as usual searching Scripture for the answers, a text we had read and heard many times before jumped right off the printed page and hit us between the eyes. “Your Father knows your needs before you tell Him.” Such relief, with that! Of course He knew, so knowing we were growing shorter and shorter of funds, and had so many needs, surely tomorrow He would start to provide for them. But tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, He did not provide for them, and then the truth began slowly to dawn. Maybe we had *other* needs, and they were more important—and poverty was His way of providing for them. It was a frightening prospect, awaiting God's good time. We had no choice but to wait. He simply did nothing about the poverty, at least nothing in the material sense. But grace is always at work, and slowly the

thing began to taste sweet. If anyone had told either of us that waiting hour by hour for the food to put in our children's mouth would be sweet, we'd have assured them they were mad. But that is what happens. He levelled us right to the ground by refusing to bless our own efforts with success, and then He showed us the bare palm of His hand by feeding us through the efforts of other people. People we have never even met, know only by their names at the end of a letter, fed us in the name of Christ. Humility is hard to come by, and when it does you've got to be good to hang on to it. I hesitate to say we are humble because we have been poor—but at least now we know what humility is. For such stubborn flesh as we, it is not a lesson one learns by choice, but by force. We would have had to be incredibly blind not to see it. "Of yourself you are nothing." Most people have to struggle to understand it, and are at a loss to define it. But to the poor, God says, "Look, I'll show you." Nothing, nothing, nothing—everything we did came to nothing—but out of His love He provided for us through the love of others. Our families, our friends, and as I said, people we did not even know—but nothing came of our own effort. And there was another aspect of humility held up to the light for us—even baser, in the eyes of most people, than having to live on the alms of others: humiliation. To be thought a fool, a flop, a dead-beat. Brothers and sisters, that's hard to take! It was crammed down your throat until you choke on it, and then slowly you begin to develop the God's-eye-view. Especially the God's-eye-view of each other. Then you look past the familiar face and into the soul, and you understand what it means—to love spiritually. It's not the whole of it but all you can bear at the moment. "This Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection . . . and for a sign which shall be *contradicted*." How the Cross scandalized the world! It's such a contradiction. It contradicts all the rules for success and happiness all the experts can cook up. Here, in contradiction, was love really beginning to bloom! Now it made the best sense it had ever made: "She is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone." If the married really want to understand what it means, then let them welcome the trials, nay—run to meet them. They come with commensurate grace, and grace over, and grace above, and grace until it spills over—and because grace is the gift of Love, if it is used, it begets love. We were no different from a thousand, a million, other couples who had been given a taste of poverty, or suffering, or whatever cross He chose to send, and we had thought all along that we loved each other. You don't begin to know what love is until you see your beloved suffer. Then, a

st, you understand. *Marriage is a spiritual union.* Then you love
not just with your heart, but with your soul.

Immortality

And there is one more (not one—a thousand, but this has
end somewhere!) ingredient in a recipe for spirituality for the
married, and that is the children. They are the final proof, the
carnation, of the spiritual union. Let the physiologists wag their
tads at such naiveté as this—and insist they are merely the result
of a union in flesh. Pray for them because they do not know im-
mortality when they see it. What a vocation marriage is! To be
called to co-operate with Almighty God and have a part in His
image and likeness. As Saint Paul could write, "Christ is glorified
in my body," so too can the married. In my body, and of my
body, and through my body—and when the union of two brings
forth one, and three, and five, and more—He is glorified again
and again. Now understand the term "lay priests," who bring
forth other Christs in a union so unreasonable that Coventry Pat-
more wrote of it that it is not unlike the Transubstantiation—
wherein bread remains bread and wine remains wine, and the
two become Christ. A man remains a man, and a woman a wo-
man, and Christ says the "two become one flesh." We are so used
to seeing children that we do not consider the miracle that they
are. The whole thing is above reason. Marriage is a spiritual life
which blossoms with immortality.

It occurs to me that perhaps this whole thing smacks of the
too-good-to-be-true. Is there no dissonance anywhere? Is this
whole thing, for the Newlands, one long unending emotional and
spiritual binge? No, it is not. But I do not intend to scandalize
our public or our children by baring our feet of clay. It is enough
to say we have them. Have we never awakened one not so fine
morning and asked ourselves: "How did I get here?" Many
times—and we've thrashed around and toyed with the idea that
the whole thing was a big mistake in the first place. But—and
this is my own private theory, it's possible I could be wrong—
marriage is no mistake. Marriage *is*. It involves a gamble, a risk,
and a good or a bad choice, but once a marriage is made, it's *the*
way to God. He wants us—and He will have us, if only we will
love Him. If I were to be limited to one rule on spirituality for
the married, it would be to remember that no matter how tough
it can be, how lonely at times, how unhappy, it can never be a
solo flight—you've got to do it together.

MARY REED NEWLAND

Unless A Man Be Born Again . . .

We are used to hearing about the effects of our childhood influences, environment and experiences on our personality. The way our parents treated us, the fact of whether they "wanted" us or not, the security or insecurity they gave us, all, we are told, made us the kind of person we are today. These influences which have affected us vitally can be traced back even prior to our birth to our pre-natal environment, as well as back even farther in our family history.

They are the subject of discussion and interest not only for psychologists, social workers and other professional persons but because of numerous articles addressed to the general public, for the ordinary person as well. For instance, you hear an anxious mother after she has spanked her child wonder if it will "mark him for life" (emotionally, that is) or after she has insisted that he wear the plain shirt instead of the cowboy one, "if it will make him feel inferior to the other kids, and prevent him from ever adjusting socially."

It is not the purpose of this article to reassure the anxious mother or to discuss the influences which can help to prevent the person from reaching social and emotional maturity. What this article aims to do is to discuss some truths to be borne in mind in the treatment of those who are suffering from neuroses and what are commonly called "emotional disturbances" whose causes can be traced far back in their lives.

Ruined Lives

One sometimes gets the impression in reading the case histories of such unhappy and unfortunate persons that their lives have really been ruined, that the only thing that would cure them would be to have them live their whole life over, to return again to their mother's womb and to have a fresh start in the world. But how can that be done? As we know, there is no re-living the past.

We become more or less justly impatient sometimes at the number of people whose cases are diagnosed and then who are dismissed as "untreatable" (we speak here not of those who are violently insane, or whose trouble is organic, but of the severely neurotic). We may or may not agree with the diagnosis and the causes given for the neurosis. For instance, we may agree that it was lack of love and security in his childhood which makes this man a wreck today, or that it was because of a mother's abhorrence of sex which she imparted to her daughter that the daughter cannot make a satisfactory adjustment in marriage. As Christian

However, we cannot go along with the Freudians and determinists and attribute all of a person's difficulties to what has happened to him in his sexual development, or to what has affected him from without (the actions of his parents, his environment, external forces, etc.), for we recognize the forces of free will and grace working within. That is why we cannot concur that what is called a person's anti-social behavior (and which is frequently really sin) is solely the effect of his "failing to make a satisfactory adjustment during the Oedipal period," and that there is no moral responsibility involved. We recognize that he is often the chief cause of his difficulty and not simply something battered around by strong sexual and environmental winds.

A New Life

But in order to get on with the discussion of treatment, let us grant that in a particular case the Freudian's diagnosis is correct. Then what? Suppose that the trouble is deep-seated and that the influences of a person's entire past life must be overcome. What is to be done about it? The only solution for the person seems to be starting life anew—to be born again. This sounds far-fetched. Our first reaction is that it cannot be done, and yet this is in the direction of a re-birth that much treatment is now given and toward which some psychiatrists are groping. For example, in the psychotherapy that was used in the case of a little girl who had a primary behavior disorder, she was encouraged to play that she was emerging from her mother's womb, then to re-live her fantasy and childhood.

It is my opinion that such psychiatrists and therapists are groping toward a truth that we as Christians already know. It is a fact: we can be born again—not, however, in the order of nature, but in the order of grace. Let us recall Our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus:

Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus saith to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus answered: "Amen, amen I say to you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Unfortunately, we Christians have thought of this re-birth or grace as limited to our spiritual or our supernatural lives. We see its function in making us holy, but not in making us whole. We have failed to see the effects it should have in re-integrating our entire personality. Because we have failed to recognize the

fact that grace is intended to act upon our whole person, we have neglected to see its potentiality in relation to emotional disturbances, sexual adjustment, and behavior disorders in general. We study the dynamics of behavior, yet neglect the dynamics of grace. Yet grace, or the lack of it, is at the root of behavior.

Neuroses and Re-Birth

It may be countered that the re-birth we refer to has nothing to do with the treatment of neuroses, since there are many baptized people who are living the "new life" of grace, but who are nevertheless neurotic. This is admittedly true, and our point isn't that as soon as a person is baptized he immediately loses all trace of neuroses and all disordered tendencies. Though it is well to point out that Baptism sometimes seems to have this effect on converts. For instance, from *The Seven Storey Mountain* we can infer that Baptism seemed to renew Thomas Merton's mental and emotional health and cure him of the hypochondria to which he was prone—not all at once, but with great rapidity nonetheless. We could give other examples of converts whose entrance into the Church brought them along with grace emotional security and nipped in the bud any developing neurotic tendencies.

But the thing is that normally grace works slowly. God ordinarily does not make a person whole or holy in forty-eight hours (although He could if He so willed). At Baptism we begin to live the new life of grace and receive the seed of holiness which is also the seed of wholeness. Baptism removes original sin; however, it does not remove the *remains* of original sin. These remains are the seed of emotional disturbances, as well as the thing which holds grace back from having its full effect on us. Although by Baptism we have begun the new life, we still have to fight against the effects of original sin. In a sense, war has not ended but only begun. The remains of original sin prevent us from becoming saints all at once, and they are at the same time the seeds of disintegration of the person. Instead of all our faculties being well-ordered, our emotions tend to overcome our reason and to prevent the proper functioning of our will. Concupiscence, disordered passions, darkened intellect, and weakened will, not only make us prone to commit sin, but they make us ready victims of emotional disturbances, inner conflicts, and mental agonies.

The Wholeness of the Saint

However, after Baptism grace is at work to heal and to make whole, to restore and to perfect nature, and to re-integrate the total personality. The cards are not stacked against us; the effect

original sin are not irreparable. Rather grace is at work to make us whole and to make us holy. It is in the perfect soul that we can see how the goals of wholeness and holiness coincide and become one. It is in the soul who has achieved full growth in the "new life" that we see that wholeness and holiness are really one and the same. The saints have sanctity, and they also have perfect sanity. Saint John of the Cross, who is the authority par excellence of the spiritual life and especially of the soul who has reached the higher realms of perfection, shows how this is so. He discusses in detail the purification of the senses and of the emotions (which in scholastic terminology he calls the "passions"), how they are brought under the control of reason, which in turn is placed under the domination of God. In the perfect soul the faculties are brought to perfect harmony, and the whole person is properly orientated. Not only has he reached the fullness of holiness, but, as far as possible in this life, his nature is restored and he achieves that wholeness, that integrity of personality, which was man's before the Fall.

In the *Spiritual Canticle*, stanzas XXIX and XXX, Saint John of the Cross describes how this has taken place, and in what state the soul who has reached perfection now lives. "In this state, in so far as may be in this life, the three faculties of the soul—understanding, will and memory—are brought to perfection and set in working order. And . . . four passions of the soul—namely, grief, hope, joy and fear—are mitigated and controlled by the satisfaction which the soul possesses." He goes on to say, "This life is therefore a blessed one, like to that of the estate of innocence wherein all the harmony and ability of man's sensual nature served him for greater recreation and as a help to a knowledge and love of God in peace and concord with his higher part." When the person has reached the summit of sanctity; there is no longer conflict within him. His spirit cannot be drawn hither and yon by conflicting pulls and drives; all is at peace, all is one.

It is true that only in Heaven will the process of wholeness and holiness reach its culmination. Here on earth even the perfect man may fall into indeliberate venial sin, may know moments of "blueness," along with the other effects of original sin like pain, sickness and death. But God's grace has so molded him that he has conquered the seeds of disintegration and is beyond the reach of conflicts and emotional pulls.

Providential Role of Neuroses

And while in the perfect man (the saint) there is the complete absence of neuroses, on the way to sanctity it is perfectly

possible that there were neurotic tendencies in him. As God can draw good out of evil, and even use our sins to benefit us and cause us to grow in humility and love, so He can use neuroses and mental suffering to sanctify us and at last to make us whole. It is true that in studying a neurotic's past life we can see causes for his neuroses, but it should be remembered that the same set of environmental conditions, or similar ones, have occurred in the cases of saints and other well-balanced people with integrated personalities. For example, lack of security can have harmful effects on a person's development, but it also could make him turn (with the help of grace) to seek his security in God's providence. Having a harsh, stern father can help us to seek with greater longing God, the all-loving Father. In the lives of the saints we can see how things which could very well become the seeds of neuroses were turned to advantage. For example, the fact that Saint Therese was not "accepted" by her playmates helped to detach her from creatures. Likewise, because of her dependence on grace her hypersensitiveness which perhaps bordered on the neurotic was suddenly and permanently cured. In everyone's history God's providence is in action, and in dealing with neurotic and maladjusted people we have to recognize that fact. Along with the damaging events that have occurred in their lives we must see those factors which provide potentialities for holiness as well as wholeness.

Purifications to Make Us Whole

The process of becoming holy and whole goes on. We must co-operate with it and depend on grace. But as the soul advances if it is to be made perfect in God, purifications must take place which are beyond human power. Saint John of the Cross has discussed in detail these passive purifications and the pain the soul suffers while God is about His work of cleansing and making whole. The two nights—of the senses and of the soul—purifications of the unconscious, deal with those defects and disturbances in the soul which are beyond the person's control. According to Father Garrigou-Lagrange neurasthenia can co-exist with the night of the senses (perhaps itself to be used as an instrument of purification). It is not important to prove that a particular person in the night of the senses is or is not partly neurotic; the point is that—in way strange to human reasoning—the process of making holy and whole is going on. In the second night, which increases in severity and intensity, it may seem to the person who is suffering excruciating agony that wholeness and holiness are both forever lost. The soul is in desperate need and in apparent hopelessness must

el that along with being forever lost to God he will lose his own nity. It is in this night when God is purifying the soul from ose things which are beyond the control of the will, from ecret sins" and "strange evils," from hidden faults and from turbances within (which are the roots of possible neuroses even the person concerned has never been neurotic) that the person arns that absolute dependence on God and grace which heals m and makes him whole. From the depth of his misery and fusion, after having learned through bitter experience his own thingness, he is exalted by God and brought to that state of ace, of wholeness and holiness which we have previously dis-ssed.

Truths to be Remembered

But what has all this got to do with the person who is actually urotic, who is miles away from both holiness and wholeness? ell, it is important that in treating him we see the goals of noleness and holiness as one. The aim is not just to untie knots d unravel conflicts. All will be in vain unless at the same time we e aware of his destiny to be filled up with grace. Remember the ospel story of the man from whom the evil spirits were driven, d who because he was left empty, called in to himself spirits ore wicked than the first. From this story an analogy can be wn in the treatment of neurotics. Don't free them from their uroses and leave them empty. Don't transform the person from ing a guiltless (or comparatively so) victim of evil and the efts of original sin—both in his own personality and in the chaos his environment—to being a mentally healthy sinner.

Use the means of grace and the remedies offered by the urch even in cases where there is no apparent "religious" or oral" problem. To attain to even the natural good of emo-onal health, grace is needed. Remember Saint Thomas' principle the necessity of grace for man to do all that he should be able accomplish naturally. "In the state of corrupted nature, man ls short even of what he can do by his nature, so that he is un-e to fulfill all of it by his own natural powers. . . . He needs (grace) for two reasons, viz., *in order to be healed*, and further-e in order to carry out works of supernatural virtue."

See the basis of the work on behalf of the emotionally and ntally disturbed as *charity*. It is toward charity that many psy-atrists and non-Christian social workers are groping. For tance, in the case cited previously of the little girl, in the treat-nt emphasis was put on the "power of love." As Christians already know the power of charity, and do not have to grope

around to discover it or to devise a substitute for that supernatural love God infused into our souls at Baptism. We should work from the basis of charity. Charity must be the predominating thing, whatever natural skills and techniques we employ to relieve the neurotic of his burden. For charity doesn't exclude valid natural means, but employs them in its service.

The person may be far removed from the goal, but love has the power to cover the distance. And charity brings with itself that inexhaustible patience necessary to help the neurotic along the road to wholeness and holiness.

DOROTHY DOHEN

THE PARADOX OF SUCCESS



JOB

CHARLOT

Abandonment

I was born with lead in my feet. My father used to offer me pennies to try to make me run. Just when I learned to hurry I did not know but when I did I couldn't stop. I couldn't wait for anything, even God. Twenty-three years ago I had completed an intensive course in ascetic theology, made an act of absolute abandonment to the divine will, and got ready to go to Heaven, in a hurry. I had a lot to learn. I had learned how to die. I still had to learn how to live. But the surrender, it seems, was real and all else, as a consequence, greatly simplified.

It has occurred to me that out of this topsy-turvy adventure of Christian perfection wiser persons might draw comfort in a topsy-turvy world. The ascetics put abandonment at the end of the book. That, of course, is where it belongs. But how long is the book? We never know, and for many in our time it is very short indeed. Also in our time there are many for whom life is more difficult than death. For persons possessed of any degree of responsibility the world today is pretty hard to take. How best can we take it?

The case for abandonment is this. It cuts the Gordian Knot. It solves the whole complex problem of human existence at one stroke. He who lives in absolute abandonment to the will of God is in the power and wisdom of God. He can know or do anything God wills him to. He has no desire to know or do anything else. Superficially nothing is changed. Superficially we think as before, act as before. Superficially things are if anything more difficult than before. *Substantially God has taken over.* And the substance begins to appear in a pattern. We find that we are doing better than we know. We perceive that we are being freed from wrong courses, guided into right. We realize that we are meeting challenge after challenge beyond the competence of our autonomy.

Today the heart of the world is breaking. How shall we find peace? I believe that our consolation, our peace of mind, perhaps even our very sanity, depends on complete surrender to the will of God. Each of us must be able to say in all simplicity: "I would suffer what it is Thy will that I should suffer. I would do what it is Thy will that I should do. Possess my will that I may have no will but Thine."

Perhaps I should say here that I speak as a layman to laymen. When I first embraced the doctrine of abandonment I had not

intended to marry, but almost immediately the pattern that was to include marriage began to appear.

About this time, twenty-three years ago, it was given me to comfort a man who was dying of abdominal cancer. As a consequence I was asked to visit a girl some distance away who was in an advanced stage of tuberculosis. In the case of the man I had not attempted instruction. In fact I did nothing that I know. I know only that he wanted me there. He suffered horribly and died gloriously—what price euthanasia? With the girl I did begin instruction and unexpectedly she also began to improve in health. Four years later she was out of bed and two years after that we were married. (Repeated breakdowns had destroyed my hope of a religious or priestly vocation.) After five years of marriage her first pregnancy brought a return of her disease and she died, three days after the birth of our only child. The birth was caesarian, done under local anaesthetic. She had a fine humor and in the operating room put on a splendid performance, which she ended by threatening twins next time. I did not need to discover, as I did later, that before she went to the hospital she had written out on a scratch-pad an acceptance of death.

Since then I have been housekeeper and nurse, teacher and breadwinner to our child. I mixed her formula and changed her diapers. I put her through the first four grades at home in two years. She has just completed the eighth grade at the head of her class. The second four grades have been done at the nearest convent. I did not choose to teach her. I had to. We were too far from a decent school. I didn't push her. She set her own pace. She was given a chance. That is all. She is entering Grade IX at twelve instead of fourteen and I'm not at all sure it shouldn't be the rule instead of the exception.

Let these personal paragraphs illustrate the life and the pattern. We suffer what is given us to suffer. We do what is given us to do. For that which is given us to suffer and to do is the manifest will of God. It is so simple I believe that many good people must live the doctrine without knowing it, but somehow, consciously or unconsciously, sooner or later, must come the transference, the whole and final surrender to providence. For the simple it may be simple. For many of us it is anything but simple. The act of abandonment is an act of simplicity and before we can achieve it we must achieve simplicity. "Unless you become like unto little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of God."

Whoever would pursue this matter further should procure some work on ascetic theology. My own favorite book was the *Solitary Wisdom* of Father Augustine Baker, a Benedictine who served the English mission in the Post-Reformation period.

I proceed with extreme diffidence to indicate an approach to abandonment. The memory of my own approach is dim and I have made no recent study. We propose to submit ourselves to God. Who is God, and what are we? God is our Father and we are His children, and if we could say the *Our Father* perfectly we could ourselves be perfect and there would be nothing more to say. Let him who despises the anthropomorphic concept remember that. We know that God is not man. We know that He *is*, and is nothing that we know. But we know that Christ is God and we know that Christ is man, and on the word of Christ, we are the sons of God. God is our Father, Who is Power and Wisdom, Justice and Mercy and Love. If anyone says that God is too great to attend to us, heed him not, for greatness has escaped him. Only the great regard the little. The poet despises not the comma, nor God the least of his work. God is our Father and we are His children, and we owe Him what children owe a father, but in finite degree.

What is it we owe to our Father Who is God? I might call it love, but I shall call it obedience. Until lovers learn obedience they do not know the meaning of love. It is obedience that makes love, love of the master and love of the fellow-servant. That is why the end of a good marriage is better than its beginning. Indeed an honest marriage *is* an act of abandonment because it is the final acceptance without reservation of the privations and duties together with the consolations of a state of life. I say that it *is* an act of abandonment. I do not say it is *the* act. But marriage often so complete a vocation that for many it may indeed constitute that perfection of obedience we call abandonment.

How do we arrive at the state of abandonment? Abandonment is whole obedience, and we achieve it by the practice of partial obedience. We make particular acts regarding particular things and obligations, actual or potential, and we make general acts excepting things we think we cannot take. As we continue our strength increases, the exceptions are fewer, and in God's good time we achieve the complete surrender. (Father Baker's book is particularly useful in that it gives many pages of exemplary acts.) We presuppose the state of grace, and here a word to be scrupulous. You do not know whether you are in the state of grace. You never *shall* know. Gather together the pieces of

your shattered will. Decide to proceed on the assumption that you *are* in the state of grace. A gamble? Why not? What have you got to lose? You have all of God to gain. You can do this and I do not see how you can do better.

I do not wish to make this more difficult than it is, but because it seems easy in retrospect there is danger that I may make it easier than it is. Remember that we are preparing a treaty of peace with God. The terms of that treaty will be complete surrender in exchange for complete security. We cannot do it all ourselves. We cannot do our own part but by God's grace, and we cannot do God's part at all. We must not be discouraged by the implications of this but also we must not disregard them, or we shall be in danger of serious self-deception with consequent delay or failure. All the strength of our nature is required for this act and it is the least that is required. We must storm Heaven itself for the grace of surrender, and God's acceptance of that surrender. I remember that among other things I walked to daily Mass and Communion four miles each way, month after month, year after year, in every kind of weather. That was probably the deciding factor. You are safe with Mass and Communion.

Do not on any consideration indulge in flagellation, extreme fasts or any thing of that sort. Such things are justified only by special sanction, which we dare not take for granted, and otherwise can do only harm. There are conditions under which even daily Mass may not be justified. For instance a mother would not be justified in neglecting her children, nor a father the labor of providing for his family. Our whole business is the *perfection of duty*, and this cannot possibly be accomplished by the neglect of duty. If you are wholly occupied with essential duty, the battle, if not already won, is certainly in your favor. "God take this duty, make it Thine. It is all I have to give. I know that if by Thy grace it is perfect it is all I need to give. Possess me wholly that I may fail in nothing that is required of me. Thy will be done."

What is the proof that we have achieved abandonment? There is no immediate proof, and this side of Heaven there is no final proof, but the proof that we have is sufficient. It is the emergence of the pattern, a chain of causality leading link by link from good to good through evil upon evil. We see that we are taking it, that we are coming through, and the knowledge of what we are taking and how we are coming through will fill us to overflowing with humility, gratitude and love. There is nothing romantic about this. On the contrary we approach the very Source of reality. Understand what it is that you have done. You have

delivered yourself into God's hands that He may have His Will with you. We shall learn that His Will is very wonderful and very terrible.

You will suffer, as you had not thought it possible to suffer, and you will not get used to suffering, because then it would not be suffering. There may be times when you will say: "This is not abandonment. This is despair. This is Hell." And until it passes you cannot know that it is not Hell. You have sometimes said: "If I were in Purgatory, I should be safe." But you did not know what you said, for now you are safe, and this is purgation. Though you do not know it now, it is because you are safe that you can suffer these things. You are under the hands of the Surgeon, excising, cauterizing, wounding that He may heal. You are being smelted and forged, ground and polished, that you may be fit for the house of God. Excluding Hell, whether by way of abandonment, or by any other way, there is no escape from this, and the way of abandonment is easiest because it is quick and sure. There is no waste of time or effort, because *God* knows what He does.

All this is of course synoptic and I shall write no book. There are many books. There shall be others. And whatever books you use must be adapted to your particular need. Even in brief a script as this there may be things that do not apply. For example, I believe that there are very gentle people with whom God deals very gently, more gently than this article would indicate. Let such be not afraid. Ultimately your salvation is between you and God. Trust *Him*. Cultivate by every means at your disposal the habit of religious obedience till you arrive at that absolute obedience where God assumes the burden. Here is the only real security. "In His Will is our Peace." *Orate pro me.*

J. E. P. BUTLER

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BOOK REVIEWS

True Progress

THE MYSTICAL EVOLUTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND VITALITY OF THE CHURCH, Vol. II

By John G. Arintero, O.P., S.T.M.
Herder, \$6.00

We are living in a godless age, so we see and judge accordingly. Like owls, we are blinded by the daylight (in the case the daylight of spirit-

itual reality) and can see only at night (the night of superficial and sensual reality). What we see is really meaningless. A baby is born of rich or poor parents, wanted or unwanted. He grows up, not in wisdom and grace, but in height and weight, literacy and sophistication. He marries this person or that, lives here or there, makes money or does not, is more or less violently unhappy, dies and is buried. So ends meaninglessly a meaningless life. Yet in spite of our blindness even such a life has a meaning, hidden from ordinary eyes. To the Christian there are the great sacramental events. For everyone exist the great spiritual and moral crises which we prefer to ignore—the temptations, the graces, the terrible choices for or against God, the last struggle of the soul on his deathbed, however camouflaged to the beholders by the scientific impersonality of the medical attendants, the drugs administered and the radio which continues playing beside the next bed. Furthermore life continues in the now separated soul—searing self-knowledge, eternal or temporary punishment, perhaps glory.

Not only is the meaning of our lives essentially spiritual, it is essentially mystical, which means concerned with grace, if only to reject it. A soul progresses toward God and away from God. Here is the core of life. Daily events are the material with which the soul works out his salvation or damnation.

All the above is clear enough to any serious Christian. But projected it to humanity at large, and it will be evident that some of the best Catholics are wearing bifocals. Yet this is true, that just as individual lives take their meaning from each person's relationship to God, daily events being the medium of the struggle, so the world takes its meaning from Christ (that is, the Church) and secular history is the material and background thereof. Or, to put it in stark form, history we call "B.C." was a preparation for Christ. Everything A.D. is ultimately measurable and meaningful only in relation to the developing and perfecting of the Church. When the number of the elect and the perfecting of the Mystical Body is completed (and only God knows when that will be) human history will cease and the end of the world will come, precisely because there will be no more reason for them to continue. Furthermore human events in any time in history take their real meaning from the building up of the Body. So, for instance, if there are great wars and disasters, and the Church is persecuted, this is likely caused in the first place by Christians who have allowed themselves to become unsalted, who have let the Body become seriously diseased. But also these evils are a means of purifying and revivifying the Body of Christ because of the saints who come to its rescue.

I do not mean to oversimplify here, in the manner of certain sectarians who claim to interpret all the daily news apocalyptically. God's providence and the development of His Church are mysterious to us and I remain so, beyond certain general principles and private revelations. I merely wish to re-establish the Christian perspective in opposition to progress theories which the secularists hold. True progress is not progressive exploitation of natural knowledge in science and technology. True progress is not more bathtubs or more money. True progress is not more and more secular education. True progress is not more and more socialism. True progress is the fulfillment in sanctity and members of the Body of Christ in His Church.

This is a long preliminary to a book review. But the book has a long title, *The Mystical Evolution in the Development and Vitality of the Church*, a title which will become more clear in the light of the review. The author has written against the rationalists and the progressists, but not with so much reference to the general secular situation as I have made. I have projected his ideas into a sociological context, whereas he sticks to the religious realm—nevertheless the implications are there.

Father Arinterro was a Spanish Dominican with a considerable reputation for holiness and spiritual direction. The book is so heavily loaded with footnotes (very interesting ones, often citing particular cases of saints or holy people of the author's acquaintance) and chapter appendices (excerpts from holy writings) that only about half of it is text proper. Most of the space is given to "The Mystical Evolution of the Individual," which is a description of the three stages of the spiritual journey and the dark nights. It is rather similar to the treatment of this subject by Garrigou-LaGrange (who learned from Father Arinterro), but more discursive.

It is the third part, on "The Mystical Evolution of the Entire Church," which is particularly interesting. Father Arinterro gives, one after another, graphic descriptions of the solidarity of Christians. He makes you see the Church as a living body always partly diseased, and sometimes ulcerous to the point of disfigurement, by unworthy members. But, he says, "... it is sometimes necessary to act with greater consideration toward sinners than toward the just," simply because they are the weak members of an ailing body, and to save the whole, also so that those of them who have necessary functions will continue to operate perfectly rather than not at all.

Father Arinterro shows brilliantly also how, because of the unity of the Mystical Body, each member can only aid the progress of the whole in his own functional role and in proportion to his sanctity. First place among vocations is given to victim souls because they are constantly working the whole body to health.

CAROL JACKSON

Seeing is Believing

ANCE OF DEATH
Drawings and Captions
by Jean Charlot
Dodd & Ward, \$2.50

It never rains but it pours. First you can't get enough Charlot, and then you get too much—or so I thought. Of course if you don't like Charlot, you won't get excited about these drawings, but if you don't get

excited about the idea—something's wrong. The jacket says it nicely. Death shown informing a lot of people he has come for them, with ironic captions because nearly everybody lives as though he is never going to die, and what is more ironic than that? My favorite is the picture of me hanging out one of my company sheets and fussing because someone has abused it and it has had to be bleached, etc., etc.; Death has popped around the corner of the sheet and is saying to *me*, "This sheet will be fine." Then there's another for my neighbor who spends his Sunday mornings fishing instead of worshipping God at Mass; Death is saying to him, "Come with me—I'll show you where there is some fine bait." My mother is an X-ray doctor and her favorite is Death and the X-ray doctor; she's been reading a fine chest film and Death pops up behind the film with, "Remember me, Doc?" That's what I mean when I say you think it's too much Charlott—until you begin to *think*. After you begin to think, you can sit around for hours thinking up a lot more. I didn't have room to include—for instance, a nifty one about a Sunday morning golfer and a hole-in-one. The most beautiful of all is Death and the Child, with one of these heroic Charlott angels, and the last one is an Alleluia chorus—but no fair telling. The price seems just a little bit too high.

MARY REED NEWLAND

BOOK NOTES

The Monks Who Worried, by Russell Collinge (Sheed and Ward, \$1) is an attractive book of cartoons pointing a slight moral lesson. *The Green Dragon*, by Sister St. Francis (Christopher Press, 25¢) is a little moral story, with illustrations, for children. . . . *Fire in the Rain* by William L. Doty (Bruce, \$2.75) is a novel by a priest about a priest both interested in Catholic Action. It doesn't quite ring true. . . . Sheed and Ward has reissued St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Mr. Sheed's translation (and what a joy it is) at \$1.50. . . . The prolific Dom van Zeller has produced another book of spiritual essays called *We Work While the Light Lasts* (Sheed and Ward, \$2.25). . . . Two impressive dictionaries have appeared. Herder has put out the 15th (revised) edition of *Catholic Dictionary*, by Addis, Arnold and Scannell. It's about four inches thick and sells for \$8.50. This is a serious dictionary of Doctrine, Disciplines, Rites, Ceremonies, Councils and Religious Orders. The other one is the *Dictionary of Dogmatic Theology* (Bruce, \$4.50) by Pirelli, Piolanti and Garafalo. It is translated from the Italian and is similar to the bigger work in some ways but not so comprehensive and Canon Law-ish. . . . A scholarly documentary biography of St. Thomas Aquinas by Rev. Angelus Walz, O.P. has been published by Newman (\$3.50). From the same publisher (at \$3.75) comes *Devotedly Yours*, by Sister Bertrande, letters from a Charity nun travelling in Europe and the Near East. . . . Ronald Knox is another man with plenty to say, this time in short stimulating essays called *Stimuli* (Sheed and Ward, \$2.25). . . . *Meditations on the Gospels*, by Bishop Ottokar Prohaszka, has been reprinted by Newman, three volumes in one fat book at \$5.50.

Our Writers

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THE UNITED STATES AND SPAIN by CARLTON J. H. HAYES (\$2.75) is recommended by Archbishop Cushing to "all United States Senators and Representatives and every newspaper editor in the U.S.A." If you are none of these things we still think you ought to read it—for your own information and also to see whether they do. . . . FATHER MARTINDALE follows the fashions of holiness in women from Saint Perpetua to Mother Cabrini, calling the book rather charmingly, THE QUEEN'S DAUGHTERS (\$3.00). Perhaps fashions isn't quite the right word, but we can't think of a better. These two books will be published on October 24th and 10th respectively, all the rest mentioned here are already out.

COLOR EBONY (\$2.25) is the autobiography and apologia of HELEN CALDWELL DAY, a Negro girl of 23. Her book is the sort that causes prejudice to die without a wriggle—she is so obviously a better thinker, better writer and better Catholic than most of us. . . . A really exciting book is FATHER DANIELOU'S ADVENT (\$2.50). Nothing to do with the pre-Christmas season. There is a Danielou way of laying God's plans for the world before you with such scope and sweep it fairly takes your breath away. . . . CARYLL HOUSELANDER gets to the roots of the main trouble of this generation: an obscure feeling of guilt without too clear an idea of what to attach it to. She treats the matter in a general way and then gives a dozen or so quite fascinating individual studies of geniuses and criminals. Very reasonably, her book is called GUILT (\$3.75). . . . Reading the Old Testament can be rather too much like trying to solve a complicated puzzle to which you are never going to see the answer. In UNLESS SOME MAN SHOW ME (\$2.50) FATHER ALEXANDER JONES who has the advantages of great scholarship and a real enjoyment of the Old Testament not only solves specific problems but thoroughly clarifies just what Inspiration and Revelation are, and leaves you reaching for the Old Testament with a much more hopeful feeling. . . . ARNOLD LUNN is extremely argumentative and so at his best in REVOLT AGAINST REASON (\$3.25). He set out to do a revision of *Flight From Reason*, but ended up with what is substantially a new book. . . . THE TRUE LIKENESS (\$3.25) by R. W. HYNK is about the authenticity of the Holy Shroud of Turin. Many photographs help to explain his reasons for believing that this is indeed the linen in which Our Lord's body was wrapped for burial. We bet there are at least three of the above books that you really want to read. If you can go right out and buy them, read no further, but if you suffer from that sad disease from which Falstaff could find no remedy, "consumption of the purse," we call your attention to the article headed *Ideas for Saint Euphonia* on page 11 of the current number of Sheed and Ward's OWN TRUMPET and to a note called *Books for Letters* on page 9. The TRUMPET, as you should know by now, comes free and postpaid on request to Pirie MacGill.

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